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## ELT IN INDIA: A JOURNEY BEYOND CLT

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### ABSTRACT

There is an increasing dissatisfaction with the limitations of the concept of method in second language teaching. Since 1990s there is questioning with the very concept of method and there by a number of ideologies were propounded by educationists and researchers like Prabhu (1990), Clarke (1994), Kumaravadivelu (1994), Woods (1996), Johnson (2000) and others. The paper aims at discussing the various methods of teaching English in India. It attempts to bring out the method of Communicative Language Teaching which is the most dominant and popular method over the recent few decades and the concept of postmodern pedagogy of Kumaravadivelu that takes the methods beyond CLT.

**Keywords:** postmodern pedagogy, pedagogic parameters - *particularity, practicality and possibility*

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### INTRODUCTION

English is effective worldwide means of communication which has created a better understanding among the people of the world by breaking down the barriers of the nations and bringing the people closer. According to Kachru (1986), English has become a world language that is taught in the Asiatic nations either as Second Language or as Foreign Language. In India, as per the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1976-77) English has been one of the three languages taught at the school and college education. There is much experimentation that went into propounding a number of approaches and methods to make the second language learning into acquisition.

According to an American applied linguist, Edward Anthony (1963), an **approach** is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language, teaching and learning of it, the subject matter to be taught, and the theoretical frame work and the approach is axiomatic; while a **method** is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language

materials. A method is more procedural and within an approach there could be a number of methods. So if an approach is the set of basic assumptions and beliefs about language and language teaching, method is the level at which planning takes place to put a theory into practice, while **technique** is the level at which the actual implementation takes place in the classroom.

### DISCUSSION

1. The **Grammar-Translation method** is the oldest method to learn a language and is based on the experimentation carried out by H.S. Ollendorf, Karl Plotz, Johan Meidinger and others. This is a way of studying a language through detailed analysis of its grammar rules followed by the task of translating sentences and texts from the mother tongue to the target language and vice-versa. Grammar is taught deductively and the rules of the target language are taught using the mother tongue. With the emphasis on reading and

writing skills of the target language, this method aims at accuracy. But the drawback of this method is that, the students never attain the speaking skill and fluency in the target language.

2. As a reaction to the grammar translation method, towards the mid-nineteenth century, the Reform Movement had started emphasizing the speaking skill to be developed in the target language. By the efforts of the language teaching specialists like Marcel, Prendergast and Gouin, Henry Sweet proposed the **Direct Method** which emphasized that second language could be best learnt if taught in the target language itself. All classroom instructions are to be given in the target language and emphasis is to develop oral skills. Grammar is to be taught inductively. Vocabulary and pronunciation are emphasized to develop listening and speaking comprehension
3. The 1950s and 60s saw the emergence of the **Audio-lingual method** and the **situational method** which gave importance to the listening and speaking capabilities and gave emphasis to the functional and situational English / the Second Language.
4. 4. The **Communicative approach** and **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** started during the 1960s dominated all the other approaches to language teaching till date and proved to be very promising in developing the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing among the learners. This approach has its base in Noam Chomsky's Syntactic Structures (1957) who proposed that the current structural linguistics is incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristics of language like creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. Hence the communicative proficiency is to be achieved while learning a language rather than linguistic proficiency. Scholars who advocated this view of language are Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson who drew on the work of British functional

linguists like John Firth, M.A.K.Halliday and American socio-linguists like Dell Hymes, John Gumperz and William Labov. The British linguist, D.A. Wilkins (1972) proposed a functional or communicative definition of language, which later is revised and expanded into a book titled *Notional Syllabuses* and this book had a considerable influence on Communicative Language Teaching. Basically it is an approach that aims to make communicative competence as the goal of teaching and aims at developing the four language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) among the learners.

5. The **Humanistic Approach** to language teaching/learning has evolved in the recent times with pedagogic and psychological insights into the nature of learning itself. As Geetha Nagarajan opines that the Humanistic Approaches tend to see language learning as a process which engages the whole person and not just the intellect. It takes into account the emotional and spiritual needs of an individual too (55).

Caleb Gattegno's **The Silent Way** uses Fidel charts and cuisine rods, and thereby make the teacher as silent as possible so as to have student responses; while Charles Curran's **Community Language Learning** (CLL) advocates using the tape recorder to record the voice of the students while teaching; Dr.Georgi Lozanov's **Suggestopaedia** is based on the principle of 'joy and easiness' and hence proposes to have music as the best way to ease the emotional tensions of the learners and promote learning; James Asher's **Total Physical Response** instructs the teachers to do all the actions while teaching a second language.

The Humanistic Approaches have made the teaching/learning of a language more learner-centric and had changed the role of teacher to a counselor or a facilitator.

6. **Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT)** is a logical development of CLT. It is propounded by Willis (1996) and believes in making the learners perform various meaningful tasks to promote learning because activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning and language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. According to Nunan, a communicative task is .... a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right (10).

7. **Postmethod Pedagogy** has been the development in the second language teaching- learning arena during the 1990s by Prof. B.Kumaravadivelu et al. According to Kumaravadivelu, *postmodern pedagogy* is ....a three dimensional system consisting of three pedagogic parameters: *particularity*, *practicality* and *possibility* (538).

- *Pedagogy of particularity* means....language pedagogy must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers, teaching a particular group of learners, pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular socio-cultural milieu (539).
- *Pedagogy of possibility* means... one that empowers participants and points to the need to develop theories, forms of knowledge and social practices that work with experiences that people bring to the pedagogical setting (541).
- *Pedagogy of practicality* means...it seeks to overcome some of the deficiencies inherent in the theory versus practice, theorists'-theory-versus-teachers'-theory dichotomies

by encouraging and enabling teachers themselves to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize (543).

From the particularity point of view, it is at once a goal and a process. One simultaneously works *for and through* particularity. It is a progressive advancement of means and ends which starts with practicing teachers by observing their teaching acts, evaluating their outcomes, identifying problems, finding solutions and trying them out to see once again what works and what does not. A pedagogy of practicality aims for a teacher generated theory of practice. A theory of practice is an on going, living, working theory involving continual reflection and action. A pedagogy of possibility is the historically and socially constructed identity of learners that influence the subject position they take up in the language classroom and the relationship they establish with the language teacher, which together have the potential to alter pedagogic practices in ways unexpected by policy planners, curriculum designers and text book producers. Postmethod pedagogy believes that context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge has to emerge from teachers and their practice of every day teaching and in this sense a *postmethod pedagogy* will always remain a work in progress.

## CONCLUSION

Over the last hundred years, in the history of language teaching, there has been a continuous search for more effective ways of teaching second and foreign languages. However, for a number of approaches there is no clear applications of their assumptions and principles in the classroom and no approach or method is complete in it self. The selection of various approaches depends on the level and competency of the students and much is left to the individual teacher's skill and expertise. There started a search whether any alternative approach/es are available outside the frame work of these brand names of methods and approaches. Even though the study of these methods and approaches is a must for teachers in order to appreciate the link between theory and practice and to understand the set of activity resources available to the imaginative teachers, how best these can be

used for efficient learning output depends up on the judgment, experience and creativity of the teacher in the class. In order to develop a personal approach to teaching, one needs to know the basic assumptions, theories, activities, beliefs, principles and techniques of effective teaching and learning. Depending on the different type of class he or she is teaching, the level of the students, the understanding of the students, an individual teacher might draw different principles at different times. Some of the principles may be derived from the familiar methods and some may be personally constructed over time based experience. Experimentation with different approaches and methods can provide teachers with an initial practice knowledge base on teaching and can also be used to explore and develop teacher's own beliefs, principles and practices. Second language teaching and learning is increasingly a field for intensive research and theorizing which would continue to motivate new language teaching and learning approaches which are totally learner centric.

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